



caring about you & your environment

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Report to the Landcare Committee
from Rob Forlong, Divisional Manager, Landcare

Divisional Manager's Report

1. Purpose

To inform the Committee about the activities and progress of the Landcare Division since the Committee's last meeting.

2. Managers' Reports

The Departmental Managers' reports are attached.

3. 2000/2001 A Review

The past financial year has been a solid one for the Division. We made some great progress. Particular highlights are:

- Our increased capability in natural forestry management including improved pest control.
- The maintenance and enhancement of our Parks and Forests and Flood Protection assets.
- The completion of the flood damage repairs.
- The completion of the Hutt Floodplain Management Plan.

However we did not complete all of the capital works projects that we had hoped. Consequently, we have to do some of last years work this year.

In reviewing the year it has become clear that the Division is facing something of a capability issue, particularly in the Flood Protection area. Over the past five or so years the Council has prepared and adopted three Floodplain Management Plans, all of which require a large effort to implement. At the same time we have faced two lots of significant floods which have caused us to accelerate a number of capital works projects.

The result has been that we are fully stretched and have not always met the requirements of the Annual Plans. I anticipate that we will continue to be stretched for the next two or three years as we continue to implement the Floodplain Management Plans. Consequently, we will need to be disciplined in sticking to the requirements of the Annual Plan and Long-term Financial Strategy. It is often tempting to take on additional work as issues arise, but the past couple of years have shown that we do not have the capability to do this.

I want to stress that this is not a funding issue. It is simply that experienced rivers engineers are in short supply and we are in the process of rebuilding that experience.

4. **Conservation Week Awards**

Recently I, along with a number of Council staff, attended the Conservation Week awards at Parliament. The awards were presented to people and groups who had provided a sustained effort to improve our conservation status. Consequently, the awards went to a number of people who have been active in conservation for a long time.

What struck me about the recipients is that almost all of them thanked the Wellington Regional Council for our assistance. Some mentioned that in recent years the Council has certainly “improved” in the area of assisting volunteers to do conservation work. I think that their comments demonstrate the success of the community connections projects in general and the care groups in particular.

I would like to add my congratulations to the award winners. I would also like to acknowledge the Regional Council staff in Landcare and other divisions who helped the award winners achieve real conservation gains. Ross Jackson, Trecia Smith, Derek Wilshere, Nigel Clarke, John Holmes, Jo Campbell, Jo Fagan, Kirsten Forsyth, Dave Cameron, Tim Porteous, Olwyn Narby, Mel Dixon and a number of people in the Biosecurity Department are all directly involved in assisting conservation volunteers.

5. **Thank You**

This is the last Landcare meeting of the 1998 - 2001 Triennium. The team in the Landcare Division would like to thank you all for the contribution you have made to our work over the past three years. We really value your support and input.

6. Recommendation

That the report be received and the contents noted.

ROB FORLONG
Divisional Manager, Landcare